

## APPLIANCE DOCTOR



JOE GAGNON

## Extinguish potential fire hazards

**Editor's note:**  
This is the second part of a two-part series on fires. You might have two potential fire hazards in your kitchen drawer — a candle and extension cord. The candle says to the extension cord "light my fire."

Statistics provided by State Farm Insurance Company show deaths from candles have increased dramatically in the last 20 years.

A majority of these casualties took the lives of children under the age of 15.

Carelessness is the main cause of these fires. Half of them started in a bedroom or in rooms where furniture and curtains ignited. The most common area for placing lighted candles, the dining room, seldom catches fire because it is usually under observation.

Candles are known to cause needless service calls and expense for consumers on major appliances. They leave a residue on the inside walls of refrigerators, stoves and dishwashers.

This can be caused by a burning candle in the kitchen or nearby room.

### Extension cords

In the past six years about two million extension cords were recalled because of the potential for fire, shock or electrocution.

These cords could not meet the demand of the appliances for which

they were used. Extension cords are responsible for about 40,000 house fires each year, 1,400 injuries and 120 deaths. If you need to purchase an extension cord look for the UL or ETL certification label on the product. Buy an extension cord with polarized plugs — one blade slightly wider than the other — or one with a three prong plug. They reduce the risk of electrical shock.

Never cover any part of the cord with rugs or other objects while it is being used. If a cord feels hot to the touch, it's not strong enough to carry the electrical current. Throw the thing away.

If you're working outside, use an extension cord that's designed for outside use. I have seen many products new and old destroyed by the use of extension cords.

A reduction in voltage occurs when you use a cord, and this can certainly cause a motor to fail. It can also void the warranty on a new product leaving you with the expense of repair.

### Unnecessary damage

Imagine, over 50,000 house fires a year caused by candles and extension cords, unbelievable amounts of damage, injuries and deaths all because of something so obvious.

The pilgrims who landed in this country were simple folks, but I believe they were smarter than many of us.

Their lives were filled with a word we seldom use today. That word is cognizant. Stay tuned.

Joe Gagnon can be heard Saturday and Sunday on 760 WJR. He is a member and past president of the Society of Consumer Affairs Professionals.

Got a question for the Appliance Doctor? Call him at (313) 873-9789, or write to him in care of Keely Kaleski Wygonik, Observer Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48160.



STAFF PHOTOS BY JERRY ZOLINSKY.

His style: Artist Hal Brenner, of West Bloomfield, collects Native American and Southwestern art. His favorite shop is Native West in Plymouth. He also visits Arizona for inspiration.

# Southwestern style

## Native American art draws artist, colors his world

BY LANA MINI  
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"Hi. You've reached the friendly tepee of Hal Brenner; if you would like a returned smoke signal please leave a message and I will contact you soon."

Step into Hal Brenner's immaculate West Bloomfield condo and enter a world of Native American decor sprinkled with upscale Southwestern accents.

First, however, please leave your shoes at the door.

Meander through his home and examine carefully placed art like the red-framed watercolor painting of a Native American woman perched upon a burro. A life-size carved Native American statue sitting atop a saddle is the focal point of Brenner's den.

Intricately beaded throws in the shape of reptiles accent his bedroom and a heavy raw wooden dining set contributes to the Southwestern tone that echoes throughout his whole condo. No corner is ignored: A trash can made from a hollowed birch tree trunk is in one corner, a wrought iron chair with a Southwest pattern

in another, and jars of pretty red fresh chili peppers are placed intentionally on a kitchen counter. Brenner notices details.

His decor comes mainly from Native West, a shop on Ann

Arbor Trail in downtown Plymouth that carries Native American-made art, furniture and jewelry. Brenner also finds rare art on trips to Arizona.

"I'm drawn to Scottsdale, the mountains of Sedona," Brenner said. "I'm drawn to the Native American and Southwestern art and the style. A psychic once told me that I was Native American in a past life ... you just never know."

Brenner is a recently retired technical illustrator with well-

coifed salt and pepper hair pulled back into a small pony tail. He wears original Native American-made turquoise and silver rings. A big silver belt buckle completes his outfit of black denim jeans and matching Native American-silk screen T-shirt.

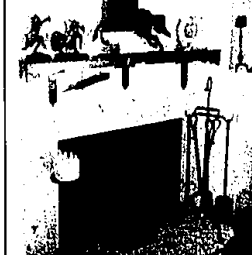
### Pleasing himself

He decorates his home to please himself. Brenner said he isn't interested in trends. Brenner began his collection forty years ago, before Native American and Southwestern decor were even popular. Of course, Native American and Southwestern style hit the mainstream in the 1980s and waned in the late 1990s, but recently there's been a resurgence, said Native

Please see **STYLE**, C2



Replica: A lizard sits atop a Southwestern patterned throw on Hal Brenner's living room coffee table. An autographed photo of Elizabeth Taylor is set nearby.



Personal touch: Hal Brenner designed the mantle in his living room.



Collection: These small Native American statues decorate the mantle in Hal Brenner's living room.

## BROWSE AND SHOP

# Antiques market offers accessories for home, garden

BY MARY KLEMIC  
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Savor the promise of spring and get away from winter by visiting Michigan's Home and Garden Antiques Market this weekend in Southfield.

This year's event, the fifth annual, will take place Friday-Sunday, March 15-17, at the Southfield Pavilion, 26000 Evergreen at Civic Center Drive (10-1/2 Mile Road).

It will feature around 50 antiques

merchants who will show and sell antiques and accessories for the home and garden. Pieces for personal adornment will also be offered.

Among the selections will be jewelry, furniture, garden and architectural pieces, birdbaths, benches, ornamental iron and garden gates, quilts, folk art, vintage clothing, purses and perfumes. The items will be displayed in an antique garden setting.

"It's a lot of fun, really nice for this time of year," said Karon Abel of Savor Faire in Birmingham. "It's bright and

they have a lot of flowers. It's a nice break from the winter."

Savior Faire, which specializes in French antiques, will make its first appearance at the market this year. Its pieces will include a pair of French iron and wood chairs that are antique train station chairs, a large vintage potting table and an antique French iron canopy bed.

Wendy Berryman of Livonia will present garden accessories from the 1920s

Please see **MARKET**, C2



At the market: Michigan's Home and Garden Antiques Market, taking place this weekend in Southfield, will feature a wide variety of antiques and accessories.